



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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Following Historic \$1.4 Billion Aid Increase, Senate Republicans Act To Further Protect Students And Schools

JOHN J. FLANAGAN June 16, 2015

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Building on the \$1.4 billion school aid increase that was the centerpiece of the 2015-16 state budget approved in March, Senate Majority Leader John Flanagan (2nd Senate District) and his colleagues in the Senate Republican conference acted to further protect students and their schools by passing common-sense education reforms that will empower parents and teachers, restore local control, and aggressively address the problems caused by an overemphasis on standardized testing.

“Whether it’s delivering an historic \$1.4 billion aid increase or working to eliminate the Gap Elimination Adjustment scheme, Senate Republicans have always been there to do what’s

right for New York's schools. The common-sense changes approved today put the focus back where it should be -- on what's best for students and parents. I am proud of my colleagues for leading the way on such an important issue," Majority Leader Flanagan said.

"All along, our focus has been to craft meaningful education reforms that put the best interests of teachers, students and parents first. This bill attacks the issues that have been plaguing our education system and causing unnecessary distress and hardship in the classrooms across New York. These smart changes will increase parent and teacher involvement in the system, reduce testing and honor local control," Senator Carl L. Marcellino, Chairman of the Senate's Education Committee, said.

By taking decisive action, Senate Republicans have provided the leadership necessary to put in place a simpler, fairer Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) system that will improve outcomes for parents, teachers and kids, while easing the anxiety that now exists in classrooms across this state.

The legislation ([S5954](#)), sponsored by Senator Flanagan, directs the State Education Department (SED) to release test questions and the corresponding correct answers to teachers by June 1st of the same school year. Doing so will encourage greater transparency and accountability, and ensure that the standardized tests are a learning tool, not just a data collection device.

The bill helps students by enacting measures to ensure that state exams in grades 3-8 are grade-appropriate and time-appropriate.

Meanwhile, the bill requires an additional 45-day public comment period following the release of the new draft regulations now being put together by the State Education Department -- allowing students, teachers, parents, grandparents and others to make their voices heard on this important statewide education issue.

This legislation also requires the State Education Department (SED) to consider student characteristics, such as English language learners, students with disabilities, students in poverty and a student's prior academic history, as factors in the calculation of a teacher's student growth scores.

In addition, the reform measures passed today require a comprehensive SED review -- with education stakeholders -- of the effectiveness and appropriateness of Common Core standards.

As part of this year's state budget, Senate Republicans worked tirelessly to eliminate nearly 60 percent of what was left of the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA) scheme imposed by

Democrats when they controlled our entire state government.

A top priority of the members of the Senate GOP conference, the state has now done away with nearly 85 percent of the original GEA.

As a result of the billions of dollars in state education aid secured by Senate Republicans both this year and in the past, students and teachers will continue to have the resources they need to succeed and thrive.